

# ***Murder, Mumia, And Michael Stone: The Theory, Practice, And Consequences Of Blanket Dismissal***

In 1999, I developed a theory that I called The Wizard Of Oz Syndrome to explain the cause of state repression. Although the phrase is not original – I thought it was ! - I believe that the ideas expounded therein show us the root cause of the problem: individuals in the service of the state are never but never held personally accountable for their actions, so they can and do, do whatever they damn well please, which often as not is make the lives of innocent people a misery.

Ironically, the one place where this doesn't happen is the new China. Although China is most definitely a repressive society by Western standards, its government takes a dim view of civil servants who exploit or endanger its citizens, and severe punishments – including public executions – have been meted out to transgressors.

The inspiration for The Wizard Of Oz Syndrome was sad, and at times painful, personal experience. The inspiration for the Theory Of Blanket Dismissal was also personal experience, though thankfully of a marginally less painful kind, the kind of pain that comes from banging one's own head repeatedly against a brick wall.

So what is this theory? Although I didn't mention it by name, I touched on it in a speech I delivered in Central London on September 17, 2005 when I alluded to some beliefs in the political sphere as revealed truths, because “No amount of reason, evidence, logic or rational argument will ever convince the true believer otherwise.”

The Theory Of Blanket Dismissal is something which extends far beyond the purely political sphere, including at times most damagingly for some people into the field of police work, criminal and related investigations. I am not alluding here to the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance, which is thoroughly documented – though painfully ignored time and time again. I am talking about something that goes far deeper.

To illustrate this theory, and how it works in practice, I propose to examine two high profile murder convictions, the case of Michael Stone in the UK, and that of Mumia Abu-Jamal in the United States.

At the time of writing, both these men are in high security prisons. Abu-Jamal spent nearly twenty years on Death Row before his death sentence was quashed on a technicality. The chances of his murder conviction ever being overturned are – happily – somewhere between zero and minus one.

Michael Stone was convicted in one of the most high profile British murder cases of the 1990s, the Chillenden Murders. The contrast in the cases is stark. Though the evidence against Abu-Jamal is absolutely overwhelming, he has been the subject of a wide ranging international campaign that has brought protests, demonstrations, calls for a retrial, and millions of dollars into the coffers of his lawyers and supporters. It is no exaggeration to say that Jamal has become an international celebrity.

In contrast to Jamal, the evidence against Michael Stone has been close to non-existent, yet there have been no protests or demonstrations at all in support of him; the campaign to clear his name has been run on a shoestring, including by a small team of lawyers who, uncharacteristically, have worked *pro bono* or for next to nothing in comparison with some of the fees they could have earned from less unattractive cases.

As might be suspected, Mumia Abu-Jamal is black, and Michael Stone is not. Even so, Jamal's blackness and Stone's unattractiveness as a human being do not explain the extreme reactions or

lack thereof from the publics on both sides of the Pond.

At the time he murdered Officer Daniel Faulkner, Jamal was driving a cab for a living. He had previously been a radio journalist, not a big name, but one to watch, certainly in his native Philadelphia. But he threw away his career by failing to distinguish between objective reporting and advocacy, in particular he became obsessed – if in a minor way – with a Philadelphia based cult, MOVE. In the small hours of a December morning, shortly before Christmas 1981, he was driving his cab when he witnessed an arrest, that of his brother William Cook. This was a routine traffic stop, but for some reason best known to himself, Cook punched the arresting officer, Daniel Faulkner, in the face. Not unreasonably, Faulkner attempted to subdue Cook, apparently whacking him with his flashlight. At this point, Jamal ran over to the two men, and shot Faulkner in the back. Somehow, Faulkner managed to reach for his gun – or perhaps he was holding it already – and let off one shot in reply, which hit Jamal in the chest.

It may have been that Jamal didn't realise how badly he was wounded – a well-documented phenomenon – and approaching the fallen police officer, he emptied his gun, one bullet hit Faulkner between the eyes. A head shot of that nature would normally be fatal, and as Jamal's gun was filled with high velocity bullets, Faulkner was killed more or less instantly.

Also, more or less instantly, the back up that Faulkner had requested, arrived on the scene. Now, obviously there was some confusion as to what had happened, but to ensure they weren't confused about *his* role in the murder, William Cook blurted out “I ain't got nothing to do with this”, apparently verbatim. He didn't say the non-existent passenger in my car shot him, or any of the other fantastic scenarios that have been dreamed up over the years. He didn't even say, it wasn't my brother who shot him. He said simply: Not me, guv.

There were other witnesses to the shooting, and as when they arrived, Jamal was sitting on the ground attempting to reach for his handgun, the police made the none too surprising assumption that he was the gunman. When it became clear he was wounded, they carted him off to hospital. There has been some suggestion that he was treated roughly, that he was walked into a pole, or even that he was beaten. Whether or not that was the case, he was transported to hospital alive, and when he refused medical treatment, instead of letting him die, the police woke up a judge and obtained a court order to treat him.

At the hospital, Jamal is alleged to have blurted out words to the effect that he had shot Faulkner, and hoped he died. Jamal's supporters claim that this *confession* was manufactured. The basis for this is that it was not reported immediately, not as if they need any sort of basis, they simply assume that it was manufactured.

Now it is a fact that the police – certainly the British police – frame the guilty as well as the innocent. That being said, they had absolutely no motive to invent this confession, which was not really a confession at all, but a boast. It is quite likely that Jamal believed he would not live to stand trial, so this was the last act of defiance of a man who hated the police and was angry at the world.

It is hardly surprising that this outburst was not written down verbatim at the precise moment it was uttered. It is quite likely the police too believed – or perhaps hoped – that the emergency room couch would be Jamal's death bed, certainly the last thing that would have been on their minds was the suggestion that he would actually deny shooting Daniel Faulkner, and they could not possibly have foreseen what would follow, that there would be an international campaign to exculpate this obviously guilty murderer, or that he would become a cult figure, writing articles and books, and delivering sermons “live from Death Row”.

Jamal recovered, and stood trial some six months later. If this trial was a farce, it was a farce of his own making. The transcripts, including those of the jury selection, have been collated and scanned by an ad hoc committee, the same people who set up the Daniel Faulkner website. The integrity of

these transcripts has not been challenged by Jamal's supporters. Though they make depressing reading, they and the other material on this site explode the countless ludicrous distortions, myths and outright lies that have been peddled and recycled by Jamal's supporters over the years.

Broadly speaking, these claims are of two sorts: that Jamal did not receive a fair trial, because he was black – bore, bore *racism* – or for some even more sinister reason related specifically to him. And that he is innocent, either that this was a case of crass police incompetence or that he was framed, largely the latter.

That his supporters should even consider the frame up claims is truly astounding. Most murders, even those that are not premeditated or consciously planned, do not fall into the open and shut case category so perfectly. In an affray for example, there might be genuine confusion as to who struck the fatal blow with a knife, a blunt instrument or a fist. Sometimes, even the actual perpetrator may not know for certain that the victim's blood is on his hands. In a case where there is overwhelming evidence of an accused's guilt, it may still be possible for a sharp defence lawyer to muddy the waters by making superficially credible allegations of police malpractice – as in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial. But this was a case where the victim was shot in front of unrelated witnesses, with the perpetrator's gun, a gun that was admittedly registered to him, where the murderer had a bullet from the victim's gun in his chest, and where the police were on the scene in less than a minute and a half.

Without the rise of the Internet, it is quite likely that Mumia would have rotted in darkness, certainly he would not have attracted such international support. Although this was a straightforward case of no great complexity, the incident was sudden and traumatic. By 1982 it was well recognised in criminal and civil courts on both sides of the Atlantic that if such an incident is witnessed by six people, and the police turn up more or less at once, within twenty minutes they will have half a dozen differing accounts of what happened. Judges are careful to direct juries to the effect that even honest witnesses with no axes to grind report the same incident in at times extremely disparate ways. While it is the task of the judge to lay down the law, it is the jurors who are the arbiters of the facts, and evidently in this case they considered the disparities in the height and weight of the accused to be of little importance. Likewise the fact that various people may have been reported running towards or away from the crime scene. At the end of the day they were still faced with a dead police officer, a wounded Jamal, and an empty Charter Arms revolver. And that was without the blurted boast of the accused at the hospital.

Added to that there was what Jamal and his brother said in court. Or rather what they didn't say. Jamal didn't take the stand, and neither did William Cook. Unsurprisingly, the jury didn't deliberate for long before returning a guilty verdict, and a death sentence followed at the sentencing hearing.

Whatever one thinks of the death penalty, the fact remains that it was correctly applied in this case – notwithstanding its being overturned nearly two decades later.

So how have Jamal's supporters managed to whip up so much support for the claim that he is innocent? The operative word here is lies. They have told them by the bucket load. The confusion of eyewitnesses over minor matters has been blown up into something entirely different – there was another shooter who ran off. Or drove off. Or who slinked out of William Cook's car, dispatched Officer Faulkner and disappeared into the night. There has been manufactured controversy over the forensics, insinuation and innuendo that the eyewitnesses – two of them in particular – were got at or verballled up to give damning but untruthful evidence. And all manner of other nonsense from the quaint to the bizarre.

In 2001, a court stenographer alleged that the trial judge boasted he was going to help them [ie the prosecution] “fry the Nigger”. The idea that a British circuit judge would say something like that is unthinkable, a judge of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas only marginally less so.

Nevertheless, Jamal's supporters – Mumiacs or Mumidiots as they are sometimes known – repeat such claims uncritically while rejecting the hospital boast, and any and all other evidence of their hero's guilt.

Judge Albert Sabo died in 2002, so he is now fair game for any and all such slanders to be repeated *ad infinitum*.

It does happen that fresh evidence emerges after a trial, after a conviction, sometimes even after a death sentence has been carried out. Such evidence is not always exculpatory. Probably the best example of this was the British case of James Hanratty, who was hanged in 1962 for a particularly senseless murder. As well as murdering government scientist Michael Gregsten, Hanratty kidnapped him and his lover Valerie Storie at gunpoint, and left her for dead after raping and shooting her. She was paralysed for life.

Long after Hanratty's conviction and execution – on fairly compelling evidence – the campaign continued. DNA profiling was unheard of in the 60s, but when it was revealed that exhibits from the case had been preserved, Hanratty's conviction was referred back to the Court of Appeal by the Criminal Cases Review Commission; the likes of the late “Campaigning Journalist of the Year” Paul Foot expected the new evidence to exculpate this working class hero. The legal authorities went to the extraordinary length of exhuming Hanratty's body, and the new evidence proved conclusively that the right man had been hanged. But did this silence Paul Foot and his ilk? Not in the slightest. [That being said, the advent of and advances in DNA profiling have led to the quashing of many convictions, including murder convictions].

There is an interesting parallel here with the Jamal case; Hanratty claimed he had an alibi for the time of the murder, and when this was discredited, he came up with another alibi during the actual trial – something which is no longer permitted in English courts. This second alibi also proved spurious, and it is very likely that he went to some considerable lengths to manufacture it. Long after his execution, Paul Foot interviewed several witnesses who claimed – undoubtedly sincerely – that he was in Rhyl at the time of the murder.

Although Jamal's supporters have not been able to place *him* elsewhere at the time of the murder *he* committed, they have attempted – by bribery or other means – to manufacture other exculpatory evidence. Cynthia White, a prostitute who testified at the trial was alleged to have been schooled or worse by the police. The evidence for this came from another prostitute, Veronica Jones, who alleged that the deceased White had told her this.

A recent convert to the Jamal cause, J. Patrick O'Connor, asserts that White was a manipulated witness. What O'Connor doesn't – or doesn't want to – realise, is that most witnesses in criminal cases are treated in similar fashion.

By and large, witness statements are not written by the witnesses themselves, but by police officers. Witness statements have to include certain information, and sometimes, some information has to be excluded from them, ie they have to be edited before they are presented to a jury or testified to in court. A witness may include much irrelevant evidence, or evidence which turns out to be hearsay. He or she may include evidence which is prejudicial to a defendant. As stated, Jamal's supporters claim that his boast at the hospital to have shot Officer Faulkner was a fabrication. Do they want this boast to be included as proof of a conspiracy against their hero? Or do they want it excluded on the grounds that it is prejudicial?

All this should be dealt with either before the trial by agreement between the prosecution and the defence, or at trial.

Sometimes, the police do go too far, but there is no meaningful evidence that they did in this case. An example of what can happen when they do – and how this can benefit an obviously guilty

defendant – is another British murder case, that of the Taylor sisters.

In 1992, Michelle and Lisa Taylor were convicted of the murder of Alison Shaughnessy. Michelle had developed an obsession with Alison's husband, and wanted her dead. She roped in her sister – a more than willing partner – and the two stabbed the newly wed Alison to death in a frenzied attack. Their undoing was that they had clearly faked an alibi, something that would obviously have aroused police suspicions, but the following year they were set free. Their convictions were quashed for two main reasons: a deluge of prejudicial publicity, in particular the notorious “cheat's kiss” photograph which appeared in a national newspaper, and what the defence were able to represent as police tampering with a witness statement.

Re the photograph, briefly, in Britain the laws relating to the reporting of legal proceedings are very different from the United States. Once an arrest is made, a newspaper or any media outlet comments on the case at its peril. During a trial, fair and accurate reporting is allowed, but it is generally only after a verdict has been returned that the dogs are unleashed. Michelle Taylor had kissed John Shaughnessy at his wedding, and this had been videoed, but when a still appeared in a scurrilous tabloid, it was made to appear anything but innocent, and the innuendo that went with it was extremely prejudicial to a fair trial.

More important though was the evidence of Dr Unsworth-White. He was the classic, unbiased witness. He had no connection at all with either the accused or the victim, but in his witness statement he said he had seen two girls leaving or apparently leaving the scene of the crime, and that one of them might have been black. In his final statement, this had become two white girls who were hurrying away. Had the doctor been got at, or had skilful police questioning elicited a more accurate reconstruction of his memory? What was the explanation? If the jury had been informed that his first statement or impression was that one of the two girls might have been black, then there would have been no ground of appeal on that point, but the police weren't willing to take that chance.

[A footnote to the trial of the Taylor sisters, one of the people who was instrumental in securing their successful appeal – Bernard O'Mahoney – realised his mistake, and published a damning book on the case, a book which they fought tooth and claw to suppress].

Coincidentally I had a similar experience in 1994 when I witnessed an attempted robbery at the Abbey National Building Society in Catford, London. Two detectives turned up on my doorstep and took a statement, and when I told them the guy who did it was white they asked if I were sure because one witness had said he was black. Absolutely no pressure was put on me to change this part of the statement, and as I was not contacted in this connection later I assume it was never used, but it is possible that the witness who reported seeing a black man was coerced, pressurised, leaned on, cajoled, or manipulated gently into giving *correct* evidence. (I have personal experience of this too, but that is another matter).

Returning to Jamal, it is not unlikely that something like this happened in connection with the murder of Daniel Faulkner. But the only evidence of tampering and gross fabrication has been by his supporters, who whine that their *new* witnesses and new revelations are dismissed without proper consideration. What they don't – or won't – understand, is that new evidence can't simply be presented after a trial and, hey presto, a retrial will be ordered. New evidence won't even lead to an appeal unless it is considered worthy of belief, and even then there are other issues, like why wasn't it presented at the original trial? In the aforementioned Hanratty case, the new evidence was deemed admissible because of advances in technology.

On what pretext could the *new evidence* supplied by William Cook in 2001 be admitted? This fingered the killer as his business partner Kenneth Freeman, who is conveniently dead. (Perhaps in the interim he'd read *The Godfather*; a similar tactic was used in that novel to exculpate a gangster for a double murder carried out brazenly in front of witnesses at an Italian restaurant). Other *new*

*evidence* is even more ludicrous, such as that which purports to prove Faulkner was rubbed out by corrupt police officers because of his intransigence to their illicit dealings. He may have had a future as a senior officer or detective, but Faulkner was an ordinary patrolman when he was cut down, although his murder is no less important for that.

William Cook's affidavit was one of five submitted to a Federal appeal court in May 2001. The flip side to blanket denial is obviously blanket acceptance; *Poor Magazine Online* wrote "The affidavits are extremely compelling reading and should be reviewed by anyone concerned with the outcome of the struggle for Mumia's freedom".

It is probably not much of an exaggeration to say that if Jamal had claimed instead that the real killer of Officer Faulkner had escaped in a flying saucer, these bods would be peddling that line even as I write these words. It has been suggested by Jamal's most vocal critics that these tactics have been adopted for one reason and one reason only, to prolong the appeals process and thereby keep him alive. It has to be admitted that if that is their only goal, then they have succeeded spectacularly.

The most recent ploy of the Jamal circus – in the fresh evidence stakes – is more plausible, superficially, than any of the previous nonsense. Fresh – or rather previously unpublished – photographs of the crime scene – have emerged. They appear to show inconsistencies in the layout, one officer mishandling the evidence – ie the guns, and in what at first appears to be a curious anomaly, there is the case of the missing divots. Faulkner was shot with a high velocity weapon, which would have blown chunks out of the ground; these divots are not there.

As I said, these allegations are superficially plausible, but they do not stand up to any sort of analysis. It is not impossible that the police did in fact mishandle the evidence – though I am not suggesting they did – and that when they realised what they had done, they covered up their mistakes. One has to bear in mind this was a traumatic incident, they turned up on the crime scene literally within seconds, and found a brother officer with his head blown off, or as good as. The gunman was sitting on the kerb, obviously wounded, he was identified as such, and they had more pressing priorities than preserving the integrity of the crime scene.

At the hospital, one of the officers told Jamal if he dies, you die – a retort that has been interpreted as a death threat, but one which was reasonable in a state where murder is capital. This appears to indicate that at least one officer believed Faulkner to be alive – he wasn't – though even if he had been, things would obviously not have been looking good.

The missing divots affair sounds curious, but the *new* photographs were not new, nor were they suppressed, but were taken by a freelance who was on the scene fairly early, and surfaced only two decades and more later, probably when he realised they might have some value – or bring him some publicity – due to the ongoing manufactured controversy over the case. The photographs appear not to have been doctored, but there is the question of resolution, and little matters like what was the state of the ground? Christian Peheim has dealt with these issues more than adequately.

The other aspect of Jamal's trial – besides his obvious guilt – has marginally more substance to it. Was it fair?

The answer to that question is probably no, but this is subject to a big qualification, namely, it is probably impossible for any accused who has been remanded in custody to receive a fair trial, but taking into consideration all the facts, his trial was as fair as it could have been. I will go further than that, and say that Jamal's trial was fairer than most for a reason that I have long observed, and one which is self-evident. Jamal was obviously guilty – quote unquote – and where an accused is obviously guilty of an heinous crime, the state goes out of its way to ensure that his trial is fair.

In support of this I would adduce two British cases, that of Ian Huntley – the Soham Murderer -

and of Dr Harold Shipman – the most prolific serial killer in British criminal history. Both these cases generated massive pre-trial publicity which led to the media being warned about bias. The summing up of both judges – which can be found on sundry websites – was clearly tilted very slightly in favour of the defence. In addition to that, both the accused were defended by top QCs. The reason for this is as I said self-evident. No one wants to see men like these walking the streets, so the system ensures they will have no grounds for appeal.

Jamal – a mere cop killer - is not in the same league as a double child murderer or a serial poisoner, but blowing a man's head off in a fit of pique still qualifies him as a menace to society. Jamal's trial was every bit as fair as the later trial of O.J. Simpson, but just because an obviously guilty double murderer walks, doesn't make the conviction of a cop killer unfair.

The two main gambits Jamal's supporters play are the race card and what might be called an enhanced race card, ie that he was set up not just because he was black but because of his radical politics - Jamal is a self-styled revolutionary.

It is true that Jamal was a member of the Black Panthers in his youth, but he was never an important member, and prior to his endorsement of the MOVE cult, his journalism was not particularly radical, certainly he was never instrumental in exposing police corruption or anything of that nature as now claimed.

It is doubtful if he was targeted by COINTELPRO as has been claimed or more properly insinuated by Ward Churchill. That leaves us with plain, old fashioned *racism*.

The problem with this sort of nonsense is that taken to its logical conclusion you can never convict anybody of anything, no matter how overwhelming the evidence. One might just as well argue that any Jew who was tried for any offence in Nazi Germany, or any black man who was tried for any offence in South Africa under the Apartheid régime must be declared summarily innocent because the system was so totally rigged against such defendants.

And we can get really creative if we bring in *homophobia* and *sexism*. Jamal's incarceration predicament stems from the fact that he did receive a fair trial, not that he didn't. Finally, is it plausible that the police would have willfully put Jamal in the frame in the full knowledge that he was not the murderer of Daniel Faulkner? The British police did that – or appear to have done it – in the case of Winston Silcott. But the circumstances of that case, the murder of PC Blakelock, were entirely different. They do appear to have genuinely believed that Silcott was at least involved with the murder, in spite of the total lack of photographic evidence against him – the murder was carried out during a riot which was closely monitored.

In that case it is quite likely that they believed they would never bring the actual murderer or murderers to book, but were intent on exacting vengeance on at least some of those they held culpable.

If I have waxed lyrical about the guilt of Mumia Abu-Jamal, there is not a lot to be said about the innocence of Michael Stone.

Dr Lin Russell and her youngest daughter Megan were brutally murdered in a quiet country lane near Chillenden, Kent. One of the family dogs was also killed, and her eldest daughter Josie, although surviving the attack, suffered terrible brain damage. She went on to make a very good recovery, and even to enter higher education, but her very limited recollection of the attack is seriously suspect, although she certainly never fingered Stone.

Stone was far from the first suspect; the murders happened in July 1996; the following December, a local man was detained for three days and questioned extensively. Although he was ruled out, he appears to have been a far better suspect than Stone, who was arrested following a renewed appeal.

Stone had been suffering from drug induced psychosis, which led to paranoia and suggestions that he wanted to kill people. He also had two very serious convictions: one which but for the grace of God would have resulted in a murder charge, and another for a hammer attack. However, bizarrely, the contexts of these attacks suggest that Stone is the sort of man who is most unlikely to attack and murder a mother and her young daughter. The hammer attack was what might be termed vigilantism; the victim was accused of - and later convicted of - indecently assaulting a young boy.

The wounding was an attack on a former friend whom Stone blamed - rightly or wrongly - for causing his then girlfriend to miscarry. Although Stone had some knowledge of martial arts, and carried a hammer - which was traced and ruled out as the murder weapon - he was far from a formidable individual, and it is extremely doubtful if he could single-handedly have dominated a woman like Dr Russell and both her daughters, and killed the dog as well. And have done so without leaving any sort of forensic evidence in his wake.

All the same, the case as presented at his first trial looked reasonably strong, until his QC cross-examined the prosecution witnesses. At the end of the day he was convicted largely by dint of three confessions he was alleged to have made to other inmates while on remand. Following his conviction, one of these inmates contacted the national media and admitted that he'd made it all up. When at last he got to the Court of Appeal, Stone's conviction was quashed in a heartbeat, but unlike the Taylor sisters, he was ordered to stand trial for a second time.

At the retrial the only – and I stress the only – evidence used against Stone was one cell confession. He was alleged to have shouted this through the prison wall to the inmate in the next cell – Damien Daley – and that after asking to be put in segregation because cons were making up confessions left, right and centre. Daley is a self-confessed liar, a heroine addict, and as well as a police informant, a man of truly appalling antecedents. Stone's alleged confession contains no meaningful information, certainly nothing that could not have been garnered from the public domain, and it is manifestly not correct in every detail.

Ridiculous though the *case* against Stone was at the second trial, the police gathered the *evidence*, the CPS presented it, the Crown argued it, a judge summed up on it, and a jury delivered a majority verdict of guilty.

Although many people are uncomfortable with Stone's conviction, including at least one fairly senior police officer, the people who put him where he is insist that justice has been done. The truth though is that the only people who truly believe in his guilt are those who need to believe in it. This apparently does not include Josie Russell, the person who has suffered most on account of this shocking double murder.

Although Stone is still fighting his conviction, it seems increasingly unlikely that any exculpatory evidence will come to light. Ridiculous though it may seem, the jury having accepted the unsupported testimony of Damien Daley, that is the end of the matter.

Under any other circumstances the word of a man such as Daley would never be given any credence whatsoever. If he were accused of a crime - any crime - the assumption would be made that he was guilty, and the onus would be on him to prove his innocence. If he were to accuse another person of a crime - perhaps a police officer of roughing him - again he would be given no credence whatsoever, and unless there was strong corroborating evidence such as a bruise, no charges would be filed. That is if he were not accused of causing the injury himself. People such as Daley are considered unworthy of belief under any circumstances whatsoever. Unless there is a need or a desire to believe them.

Of course, it is not unreasonable to adopt an attitude of extreme skepticism towards people of such



**appalling character, but this should be a genuine skepticism; it is simply not sufficient for the legal authorities or anyone else to believe what they want to believe and reject the rest.**

**In the political arena, the problem is if anything even worse. Anyone seeking to raise certain issues or certain facets of those issues will be treated like a pariah. At one time such people were denied any free speech at all, but with the advent of the Internet this is thankfully no longer possible. Though that doesn't mean the repression has been totally thwarted, or that the epithets will stop flowing.**

**Of course, in the political sphere or areas related to politics - history, race issues etc - even the most apparently dispassionate seekers of truth have agendas, though they may not recognise these agendas themselves. But people with agendas can still be truthful, and deserve to be heard.**

**It is highly probable that all the police officers on the ground the night Mumia Abu-Jamal murdered Daniel Faulkner were hostile to the Black Panthers and similar self-styled revolutionaries, but it is just plain foolish to dismiss all their testimony simply on account of this. There is too much of it, their evidence is largely consistent with that of all the other witnesses, and the alternative scenarios advanced by Jamal's supporters simply beggar belief.**

**Be that as it may, the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, extreme though it is, represents the ultimate triumph of ideology over reason. The case of Michael Stone is indicative of the same phenomenon, albeit from an entirely different perspective, not necessarily a political one.**

**Unless and until we can overcome this perversion of Western thought there will be little or no hope either for the survival of freedom, of Western Man, or of civilisation itself.**